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Introduction

Mobile Number Portability

India, which is the world's second largest mobile phone market in terms of subscribers, had a total of 762.62 million active and 836.36 million in total mobile connections as on January 2014, data from telecom regulator Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) showed.

Mobile Number Portability (MNP) requests have increased from 10.94 Crore subscribers at the end of December 2013 to 11.20 Crore at the end of January 2014, registering a growth of 2.35%, the latest data from Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has revealed. In the month of January 2014 alone 25.60 Lakh requests have been made for MNP, TRAI data said.

Mobile Number Portability (MNP) allows the Mobile service subscribers to retain their existing mobile number when they move from one Service Provider to another Service Provider with in a same licensed service area. This move is irrespective of the mobile technology or from one cellular mobile technology to another of the same access provider, in a licensed service area. In other words, the Mobile Service Subscriber can switch from one operator to other. Using Mobile Number Portability, you can change the operator without having to change your number. So if you are using a mobile number 9829012345 for and are using the service from some operator (say Reliance) and you want to switch over to another operator, say BSNL, then you will not have the need to change the number. So when Mobile Number Portability in India comes to effect, you will have the ease of having the same number while using any operator's service you want. Mobile Number Portability in India offers you the freedom to select the operator whose network and the features you like without having to think 100 times about informing the change in your mobile number to your hundreds of friends and contacts. In near future we will have Mobile Number Portability facility within states also in India.

Mobile Number Portability terminology:

Donor operator: It is the operator from whom the number is porting-out.

Recipient operator: It is the operator that would provide services to the customer after porting.

Number Portability Database: It is the repository of all the ported numbers. It provides a unique routing number in response to a query from any network operator.

Routing number: A unique number stored in the number portability database that is used to route the call to the recipient operator.

Mobile Number Portability background:

Though it was introduced as a tool to promote competition in the heavily monopolized wire line telecommunications industry, number portability became popular with the advent of mobile telephones, since in most countries different mobile operators are provided with different area codes and, without portability, changing one's operator would require changing one's number. Some operators, especially incumbent operators with large existing subscriber bases, have argued against portability on the grounds that providing this service incurs considerable overhead, while others argue that it prevents vendor lock-in and allows them to compete fairly on price and service. Due to this conflict of interest, number portability is usually mandated for all operators by telecommunications regulatory authorities. Singapore mobile subscribers were one of the first in the world to enjoy mobile number portability through this Call-Forwarding solution when it was launched there in 1997. Hong Kong, the UK, and Holland followed in 1999 and now over 54 countries around the world have implemented mobile number portability.

MNP by country	Year of implementation
Hong Kong	1-Mar-99
Australia	25-Sep-01
Italy	1-Apr-02
Germany	1-Nov-02
France	30-Jun-03
USA	24-Nov-03
Saudi Arabia	8-Jul-06
South Africa	10-Nov-06
Canada	14-Mar-07
Pakistan	23-Mar-07
New Zealand	1-Apr-07
Singapore	13-Jun-08
Mexico	5-Jul-08
Brazil	1-Sep-08
India	20-Jan-11

Mobile Number Portability in India:

The Telecom Regularity Authority of India (TRAI) issued draft regulations to facilitate mobile number portability in India on March 8, 2006 and submitted its recommendations to the Department of Telecommunication (DoT). Finally, the DoT recommended the service provider number portability including service portability (portability between GSM and CDMA) for all mobile service operators. It was decided to implement the all-call-query approach for mobile number portability by DoT.

The DoT has divided the entire country into two zones for MNP i.e. north-west zone and south-east zone. The licenses were given to two vendors to work as MNP clearing house administrators. The north-west zone has Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, UP (East), UP (West), Delhi and Mumbai. The south-east zone has Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, North East, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kolkata.

MNP clearing house administrators manage a central mobile number portability database that keep record of all ported-in and ported-out numbers. The operators also

maintain their own MNP database called local number portability database.

The originating network performs number portability database query to get the location routing number to route the call directly to the recipient network. Location routing number is a 4-digit unique number allotted by DoT to all mobile operators for each circle to identify individual networks. All ported number calls are routed on the basis of location routing number. Therefore, when the MNP database receives a query for a given mobile station international subscriber directory number (MSISDN), the database returns the MSISDN prefixed with location routing number back. Mobile number portability was started as a pilot project at Haryana on November 25, 2010 and has been implemented in entire nation from January 20, 2011.

At present, the only restriction is that mobile number portability is allowed within the same circle (intra-circle operators). Very recently, the government of India approved New Telecom Policy-2012 (NTP), which aims to remove roaming charges across the country and facilitate nationwide (inter-circle) mobile number portability i.e., one-nation-one-number with no roaming charges. This will facilitate users to change the operator without changing their mobile number even if they move from one circle to another one. DoT has been asked to start nationwide MNP and it is expected that the inter-circle MNP will start very soon.

Mobile Number Portability in Rajasthan and other Circles

In the month of January 2014 alone 25.60 lakh requests have been made for MNP, TRAI data said. "In MNP Zone-I (Northern & Western India) maximum number of requests have been received in Rajasthan (about 1.13 crore) followed by Gujarat (about 96.5 lakhs) whereas in MNP Zone-II (Southern & Eastern) maximum number of requests have been received in Karnataka (about 1.28 crore) followed by Andhra Pradesh Service area (about 1.03 crore)," the report added. During January 2014, the active wireless subscribers of Peak VLR (Visitor Locator Register) stood at 86.49% of the total subscribers at 77.27 crore, it added. A visitor location register (VLR) is a database that contains information about the subscribers roaming within a mobile switching center's

(MSC) location area. It is an indicator of active wireless subscribers of a mobile network. According to the data, Idea leads the tally in VLR with 101.79%, followed by Bharti Airtel at 96.16% and Vodafone at 95.70%. Meanwhile, Loop has the lowest proportion of VLR with 48.85%. Circle-wise, West Bengal has the highest proportion of VLR subscribers with 92.91% followed by Maharashtra (92.19%) and Assam (90.40%). Tamil Nadu (incl. Chennai) has the lowest VLR proportion with 75.82%. Meanwhile, the wireless subscriber base across GSM, CDMA and FWP platforms have increased from 88.63 crore in December, 2013, to 89.33 crore at the end of January, 2014, registering a monthly growth of 0.79%. While the number of urban wireless subscribers increased from 52.67 crore to 52.93 crore during the same period, the number of rural subscribers base increased from 35.97 crore to 36.40 crore, TRAI data said. The urban wireless Tele-density has increased from 138.94 to 139.42 and rural Tele-density has increased from 41.95 to 42.43 during the same period. At the end of January 2014, private operators held 89.01% of the wireless subscriber market share where as BSNL and MTNL, the two PSU operators held only 10.99% market share, the TRAI document stated. Among the private operators, Bharti Airtel had 22.48% of the market share, while Vodafone had 18.16% of the market share followed by Idea and Reliance at 14.58% and 13.17 % respectively, during the above mentioned period. The market leaders Bharti Airtel added 24, 33,218 new subscribers while Vodafone added 17, 80, 333 subscribers, and Idea reached out to 15, 32, 661 new subscribers, during January 2014. Aircel and Reliance meanwhile added 15, 32, 241 and 4, 06, 359 new subscribers respectively during the same period.

Consumer Behaviour

The term consumer behaviour is defined as the behaviour that consumer display in searching for, purchasing using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. Consumer behaviour focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption-related items that includes what they buy, why they buy, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluations on future purchases, and how they dispose of

it. Two different kinds of consuming entities: the personal consumer and the organizational consumer.

Personal Consumer: Buys goods and services for his or her own use, for the use of the household or as a gift for a friend. The products are bought for final use by individuals, who are referred to as end users or ultimate consumers.

Organizational Consumer: Includes profit and non-profit businesses, government agencies (local, state, national) and institutional (e.g. schools, hospitals, and prisons), all of which buy products, equipment, and services in order to run their organizations.

Consumer Behaviour and Mobile Number Portability

The main purpose of this study is to understand the customers' behavior towards the choice of changing their existing service provider and the strategies used by the telecom companies to pull the customers towards themselves and to retain their existing customers. The regulatory bodies like Department of Telecommunications (DOT) and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) have facilitated the cell phone users to freely roam among desirable services by retaining their existing mobile numbers and also to avail different technologies like 2g, 3g, CDMA and GSM or post- paid and pre-paid. MNP has brought many new prospects in the telecom sectors which for sure are going to exaggerate the competition in market to pull each other's customers and retain their existing customers as well as it would end the existing monopoly of several big players in the telecom sector and would be a leverage to ascertain the best possible services to the common mobile users in the country. This competition has emerged into the better services provided by the telecom operators as well as introduction of newer technologies like 3G, Blackberry services, etc to attract the customers.

Telecom operators today are doing lot of research to understand the value added service requirement of the customer. Various mobile applications have been launched with the accessibility of smart phones. The prices of these phones are most reasonably priced with competition at its peak. Consumers today are happy as they can customize their phone using several applications available at no cost or at very small costs. Not just the cell

phone but MNP has made the customer a Boss allowing him to preserve his mobile number along with his own preferred type of mobile.

Telecom industry being a capital intensive business needs enormous capital every year for its development and spread. It involves huge cost towards maintaining and building-up of network infrastructure. However, the government has realized the blow of cost on slow growth of telecom sector and permitted various operators to share infrastructure. The various telecom service providers are partnering to minimize the duplication of cost and attempt, bringing about major financial and operational savings, thus leading to better margins. This is in support of the operators and the customers as the some of the benefit of cost is passed on to customer's pot also. Every month, on an average of 12 million subscribers is getting added to the subscriber base. To sustain this growth, operators need to increase their backend infrastructure. With the coming bid of 4G spectrum very shortly in near future, the requirement for more sites to support the launch of new products and services by operators will put added pressure on the current infrastructure.

In addition to this, there is huge likelihood for the industry to capture untouched rural market lying with future business possibility. To tap the rural market of India, which is spread over an enormous geographical area, operators need vast capital to invest in the building-up of the network. Hence, infrastructure partnering is the only way out to increase operations in rural market without a great deal of investments.

Permitting infrastructure partnering is a clear example of how the Government policies can alter the entire scenario of how an industry operates and grows and how it profits the eventual consumers. This judgment has played an essential role in such a remarkable growth of telecom industry in India. It is also notable that to maximize the benefits of 3G and 4G services, government should permit spectrum sharing so that these services would be obtainable in all the circles with least costs.

However, whether the market is flooded or not or whether the mobile operator is handing out freebies or not, the Indian consumer is not shy to move away from his home network in search of greener pastures with other network operators. Whether it is for a better

network coverage or better tariffs and SMS rates or simply for high-speed internet, mobile number portability has come as a benefit to mobile subscribers in India and they are enjoying it.

Review of Literature

Mukherjee, D., and Chatterjee M. (2 July 2013). Business Process Reengineering and Customer Satisfaction with reference to Indian Telecommunication sector. Journal of Academia and Industrial Research, Volume.2.

This study was done to understand the satisfaction level of the customers through technology advancement. Business process reengineering actually plays role of a weapon in Indian telecommunication sector. This study reveals customer's need for fast cycle capability and competitiveness of the system. It also talks about the satisfaction level of customer as per current system. It further emphasizes need for strategic planning and IT enabled reengineering business process to enhance satisfaction level of the customers.

Dhage, A. and Prasad, A.K.N. (1 Mar. 2013). Impact of Infrastructure sharing on Indian Telecom Sector. Aweshkar Research Journal, Volume.VX.

This study talks about the huge costs involved in telecom services towards setting up and maintaining the networks as high execution risks in installing the active electronic components. The policy of government of India to allow the various telecom service providers to share their infrastructures has led to unprecedented growth in the sector. The various telecom service providers are becoming partners to minimize the duplication of cost and effort, bringing about significant financial and operational saving, and hence better margins.

Allowing infrastructures sharing to telecom operators is a live example of how the Government policies can change the complete scenario of how an industry operates and prospers and how it benefits the end consumers.

Yadav, R. K. and Dabhade, N. (2 Feb 2013). Effects of Mobile Number Portability in Telecom Sector - A Case Study of Idea Cellular Ltd. Indian journal of Economics and Development,Volume.1.

This study talks about the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) as a great opportunity which can increase acquisition and to a greater extent encourage healthy competition

among telephone operators but the process, functionality, subsequent administration and maintenance is a complex one, involving the careful planning and balancing of factors such as cost, convenience, simplicity, speed, reliability, heterogeneous integration and robustness. Mobile number portability is now a crucial issue for mobile service providers. The most challenging job for the present day is that retain existing mobile customers.

Reddy, M.V.K. and Prasad S.R. (June 2013). Implementation Procedure for Mobile Number Portability. International Journal of Innovations in Engineering and Technology.

The study talks about the need for Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in increasing number of countries. In India, the process has already been initiated and accepted widely. The customers are now free to switch to desired operator without changing their numbers. The number portability gives freedom to subscriber to choose best service provider. This paper also discusses what are different types of mobile number portability and how do they work.

Lee, H.S. (6 Jan. 2013). Major Moderators Influencing the Relationships of Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty. Asian Social Science, Volume.9.

This study reveals that service quality and customer satisfaction positively affect customer loyalty. In addition, service quality positively influences customer satisfaction. Hence, customers with high perceived service quality and satisfaction also have strong loyalty. Furthermore, the study verifies the fact that moderating variables positively influence the relationships among the aforementioned factors. Among customers with a high level of perceived value, the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction increases. In addition, when customers' perception of reasonable price increases, the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction increases as well.

Jindal, N. (1 May 2013). Mobile Number Portability. International Journal of Open Scientific Research, Volume.1.

This study was done to understand the satisfaction level of the customers through

technology advancement. Business process reengineering actually plays role of a weapon in Indian telecommunication sector. This study reveals customer's need for fast cycle capability and competitiveness of the system. It also talks about the satisfaction level of customer as per current system. It further emphasizes need for strategic planning and IT enabled reengineering business process to enhance satisfaction level of the customers.

Damodaran, S. New strategies of industrial organization: outsourcing and consolidation in the mobile telecom sector in India. Ambedkar University.

The paper discusses the experience of the mobile telecom sector in India in terms of its business organization. There is a high level of outsourcing of activities, including those such as network management, which would usually be included within the core competence of mobile telecom companies. The outsourcing strategies were pioneered by Bharti Airtel. This has resulted in considerable cost savings.

Hosseini, S.Y. and Zadeh, M.B. (2 July 2013). Providing a Multidimensional Measurement Model for Assessing Mobile Telecommunication Service Quality. Iranian Journal of Management Studies, Volume.6.

This study talks about measuring mobile telecommunication service quality in Iran. A multidimensional measurement model has been proposed based on an extensive literature review and then, to assess the model validity, convergent and discriminated validity have been established based on the survey data gathered from 363 of Iranian mobile phone subscribers. Findings of this study showed that customers form their service quality perceptions based on their evaluations of seven primary dimensions including: network quality, value-added service, pricing plans, employees‟ competency, billing system, customer services, and service convenience.

Prasad, A.K.N. and Ningzhen, R. (2 Sep. 2013). ARPU in Telecom Sector: A Study on its Impact and Trends. Aweshkar research journal, Volume .XVI.

The article talks about the impact of many service providers on the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU). The fierce competition has reduced the attractiveness of the industry. When faced with the challenge of falling ARPU, MoU, and increasing costs, service

operators' profit margin is driven down. It also emphasizes that decrease in competition may increase the telecom service price for consumers.

Begum, A. and Ali, M.T. (Feb. 2013). Security Threats in Prepaid Mobile. International Journal of Computer Science and Network, Volume.2.

This paper discusses about various prepaid techniques, challenges and counter measures in prepaid mobile communication system. The worldwide mobile communication market is exploding, and 50 percent of subscribers are expected to use prepaid billing. Prepaid services are driving mobile communication into emerging markets such as South America, Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Gulf Countries. Prepaid phone service requires a user to make payment before calling. It is quite common to get prepaid SIM cards on every major Network.

Deoskar, A. (3 Mar. 2013). Study of consumer behaviour in cell phone industry. International journal of research in commerce, IT & Management, Volume.3.

The study attempts to investigate the basic reason and mindset of consumer while purchasing a cell phone handset and its service. The researcher has surveyed 145 cell phone consumers from Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad area. The result indicates that the price, appearance and user friendliness were considered as the prime factor while purchasing a handset, and cost, quality of service and network connectivity were considered as the most influential factor in terms of service provider selection.

Muruganandam, D. and Gopalakrishnan, S. (Mar. 2013). A study on subscriber's preference towards mobile number portability, in Coimbatore city. Elixir International Journal.

The study brings out subscribers preference of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in Coimbatore city. The main objective of this study is to know the subscriber inclination and major influencing factor for preferring a particular operator. As per the study, most of the respondents are not aware about the MNP process. Also it says that the major reason for dissatisfaction is poor network coverage in the city.

The Impact of Mobile Number Portability on Price, Competition and Consumer Welfare. Journal of Academia and Industrial Research, Volume.2.

This paper examines the effect of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) on European market price, competition and consumer welfare. MNP allows consumers to keep their phone number when they change carrier. Accordingly, MNP facilitates competition by reducing consumer's switching costs. Most European countries introduced MNP in the early 2000s, which provides an opportunity to study the relationship between switching costs and price. MNP in Europe has been mandated by the European Commission and landed in each country as an exogenous shock.

Das, D. (4 Apr. 2012). An empirical study of factors influencing buying behaviour of youth consumers towards mobile handsets. Asian Journal of Research in Business Economics and Management, Volume.2.

The present study is an empirical research based on survey method. A handset of reputed brand, smart appearance, and with advanced value added features, pleasurability and usability; is the choice of consumers in between 20-30 years in age-group, females in gender-group, graduates/post-graduates in level of education-group, students/service holders in occupational-group, urban residents in geographical-area group and with annual family income between Rs.1-3 Lakh.

Thomas, C. (Feb. 2013). Medico-Socio-economic Impact of Smart Phones on Users' Psychological behavior in India. American Journal of Behavioral Science and Psychology, Volume.3.

This paper reports on psychological and emotional impacts of usage of smartphones on user's psychological behavior in India. The major changes in customer psychological behavior have been brought by the growth of smartphones usage with its high-speed Internet technology. Smart phone brings changes in attitudes towards the traditional mass media and satisfaction. This paper tries to investigate what types of psychological and emotional impact made in India due to usage of smartphones with high speed Internet environment.

Schiffman, L.G. Kanuk, L.L. and RameshKumar, S. (2010). Consumer Behaviour (Tenth Edition). Noida: Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd.

This book has centered on the examination and application of consumer behaviour to the planning, development and implementation of marketing strategies. It also captures the impact of new media on consumer behaviour and on marketers' ability to learn more about customers' purchases and target them more precisely.

Green, n. and Haddon, L.(2009). Mobile Communications: An Introduction to New Media. Newyork: Berg

The cell phone has achieved a global presence faster than any other form of information and communication technology. The relationship between public and private space, how we view time and space, how we rely on and negotiate social networks – all are increasingly centered on this small piece of technology.

Mobile communication presents a succinct, challenging and accessible overview of the transformations and challenges presented by this most personal yet most overlooked technology.

Significance of Research

Telecom Industry is the fastest going industry today. It is just not possible to think about our fast moving lives without mobile phones. From morning alarm to note of important data, from entertainment to social media, we are completely dependent on our phones.

Mobile Number Portability has emerged as an important tool with mobile consumers to choose best of services amongst various service providers. It not only has benefited the industry but also the consumers. More than 100 million portability requests have been raised till August 2013 in India.

With the increase in mobile penetration in rural India and the awareness of technology amongst rural consumer, it becomes an important stream of study.

Justification and relevance of Research

- There is lot of research already done on Mobile Number Portability in urban areas of India. However, the major population residing in Rural India which is 72.2% needs to be studied as this is the future market for any service provider.

- India being world's second largest telecom market, it is inevitable to understand the consumer satisfaction and perception about Mobile Number Portability in rural area which has huge opportunities.

- The study would throw light on the choice of appropriate media for promotion of Mobile Number Portability in rural areas.

Scope of Study

The universe for the research would be rural areas of Jaipur district. Jaipur district is divided into thirteen Tehsils. Eight Tehsils would be selected randomly and four villages from each Tehsil would be selected contributing to approximately 500 mobile users as respondents.

Objectives

- To determine the level of awareness of Mobile Number Portability amongst rural mobile users.
- To analyze the level of satisfaction of rural mobile users with their current service providers.
- To study the expectations of rural mobile users from service providers.

Hypotheses

- Ho1: There is no significant relationship between level of satisfaction and Mobile Number Portability amongst rural consumer with current service providers.

- Ho2: The perception of rural mobile users does not affect Mobile Number Portability.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A research design is framework or plan for a study used as a guide in collecting and analyzing data. There are three basic types of research design: exploratory, descriptive and causal.

The goal of exploratory research is to discover ideas and insights. Descriptive research is usually concerned with describing a population with respect to important variables. Causal research is used to establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables.

The research design for the research is exploratory in nature.

Sample Design

A sample design is the road map that serves as the basis for the selection of a survey sample and affects many other important aspects of a survey as well. In a broad context, survey researchers are interested in obtaining some type of information through a survey for some population, or universe, of interest. One must define a sampling frame that represents the population of interest, from which a sample is to be drawn. The sampling frame may be identical to the population, or it may be only part of it and is therefore subject to some under coverage, or it may have an indirect relationship to the population. The sample design provides the basic plan and methodology for selecting the sample.

The universe for the study would be rural areas of Jaipur district. The District is divided into thirteen Tehsils. Eight Tehsils would be selected randomly. Further four villages from each Tehsil would be randomly selected for research contributing to 500 respondents would be further categorized on the basis of Age, Income level, Occupation and Literacy level.

The sampling technique would be multi-stage sampling and random sampling.

Data collection and Analytical Tools

Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business, etc. While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same. The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed.

Primary data: It refers to data being obtained from a first-hand experience by the research through various methods. Some of them are:

Experiments
Surveys
Questionnaires
Schedules
Focus groups
Interviews

The data collection tools to be used in the research would be interviews and schedules.

Secondary data: It refers to data gathered in the past or obtained from other party. It is readily available and is available to the public through various sources. Few of them are:

Journals
Newspapers

Publications

Magazines

Field notes

Observation records

Case studies

Analytical tools

The statistical techniques used for establishing the relationships between the data and the unknowns and methods used to evaluate the accuracy of results i.e., the analytical tools of research are very important for scientific analysis of the problem. The design of the methodology and its aptness in the context of the particular research study are the most important parts of a scientific and systematic research.

The models used, statistical measures applied, the testing of hypothesis – parametric and non-parametric tests used, other tools, statistical techniques, and formulae used, etc. form part of the analytical framework of the study.

Statistical analytical tools to be used in the research would be: Chi-square test, ANOVA test, Z-test, Correlation, Percentage, etc.

Limitations of Future Research Work

- Since the universe chosen is rural area, the responses would be captured through schedules. There may be difference in capturing of responses due to individual perceptions.

- It may be difficult to cover more number of villages due to distance and time constraint.

- The willingness of respondents to participate in the study may be a concern.

Chapterization

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Appendices

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